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the forest floor, and on either side a view of tree trunks on which rest moths and other insects, and the margin of a wooded pool in early summer, with a male wood duck at rest.

We give below a description by Mr. Thayer of the ideas which have guided him in working out these rather unusual groups, which will, it is believed, prove of great value in inspiring a love of the beautiful things in nature.

F. A. W.

BEAUTY AND FITNESS

By Gerald H. Thayer

"Beauty and the uses of beauty in the world of Nature"—such a phrase as this suggests the aim of the new exhibits for the Children's Museum.

"Beauty" is indeed a mystery—the crux and matrix of unbounded argument and theory. Yet on one point there is at least a tendency to agreement, and that is, that beauty and fitness are forever closely associated. The finest Arab steed is the most "beautiful," and in every line and angle of his alert sleek body reveals to the knowing eye his *fitness* for the highest functioning of the Arab horse's special attributes of nimbleness, endurance, speed. "Beauty," in this case, is fitness visible. And the same is true, assuredly, of the beautiful physique of the perfect human athlete, beloved of Phidias and the great sculptors and painters of all ages. So, too, in a slightly different sense, with the loveliness of the perfect woman, as typified for instance in the Venus of Milo—for what does such a figure show but womanly fitness at the highest pitch of perfection?

Stepping then from this human realm to the world of what we call "nature" and the "lower animals," what fitness-meaning is to be discovered in the elaborate, bizarre and even fantastic-seeming beauty of birds and beasts and butterflies and snakes and fishes? Displayed in a bare case, a specimen of one of these creatures delights the eye by richness of color or elaborateness of pattern, and we exclaim, rightly, that the creature is "beautiful." Yet there is a *mysteriousness* about this beauty—a *something more*—and the longer we contemplate it the more urgent the sense of this something more becomes. Beauty we have realized, is not, after all, "its own excuse for being." What, then, we find ourselves wondering, *is* that further significance, that fitness-meaning, which seems to flicker in and out of the

edges of our consciousness when we contemplate the mere beauty of the gorgeous male wood duck or the tiger swallowtail butterfly?

It is precisely to such questioning as this that the new exhibits in the Children's Museum are intended to convey at least a partial answer. In them we shall see revealed almost at a glance, evident fitness-meanings (even if not necessarily the only fitness-meanings) of the elaborately wrought beauty of birds and butterflies and reptiles, rich-colored and highly-patterned as well as sober-hued and sparsely marked.

The display cabinet of butterflies and moths, previously installed, may well serve as an introduction to this whole story. Here we have beauty, *per se*, sheer loveliness, mere eye-delight of color and pattern and form, produced by an arrangement of real moths and butterflies wrested from their natural environment and arranged in purely arbitrary style without regard to type or sort or place of origin, simply a color-glory made with butterflies, as if an artist, making his color-sketch for a church window or gorgeous decoration, had worked from a palette of butterflies instead of a palette of paint. The object here is to show at a glance, vividly and convincingly, how very marvelously beautiful butterflies are in color and pattern and form.

From this point, once attained, two exceedingly significant steps are possible in exactly opposite directions. First, the step,—already indicated, and toward which the new group exhibits will prove helpful—to the realization of the surprising fitness-meanings in environing nature of these mere “beauties” of the butterfly or bird. Second, the step to the adaptation of these various natural beauties to human designing, to the embellishment of our own human handiwork with loom and brush and needle. “Nature,” as here suggested or revealed, is an inexhaustible store-house of supremely beautiful designs and color-schemes for the artist or the handicraftsman. Moths, butterflies and birds furnish in their color combinations and strange patterns clues to designs of the amplest, subtlest and most satisfying beauty. This is a mine of the richest ore, awaiting diggers. In our Occidental world, at least, the surface of this treasure store has been scarcely more than scratched. The earliest courageous diggers will be best rewarded, if we must regard novelty as a vital asset, yet the supply is all but inexhaustible.

An art museum has greater opportunity than any other institution to promulgate such truths, with their really vast potential bearing upon art both fine and applied.

For children, in particular, there is also a still more specific use which these new exhibits of nature-camouflage can be made to serve. They will prove an admirable help in that vitally important matter, the training of the powers of observation.

Beginning with the simpler groups, as those of the purple gallinule and the wood duck, where the bird, although evidently well camouflaged, is not, in such restricted area, actually difficult to discover, the child can be led to the complicated groups showing the forest floor, the tree trunks, and the upland grasses, each containing a number of intensely camouflaged creatures, some of which it will require the closest and often prolonged attention on the child's part to discover at all. The study of these more complex groups can be made for children a fascinating game of seeking and finding. Key charts outside the cases, and covered over until their help is desired, will make evident the location on tree-bark or dead leaves or grass of the specimens most difficult to see, and also provide the name, both common and scientific, of the various camouflaged creatures.

THE PRINT CLUB

The first annual meeting of the Cleveland Print Club was held at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ralph King on the evening of February seventh. The President, Mr. Charles T. Brooks, gave a brief account of the activities of the Club, and attributed much of its success to the interest and efforts of Mr. King. He reported that about half of the Museum's collection of prints had been acquired through the efforts of the Print Club since its incorporation in December, 1919. Out of the Club funds, purchase of three etchings by Kerr Eby have been made as well as seven McBeys, thirty-one Seymour Hadens (these include his *Sunset in Ireland* and his *Shere Mill Pond*) and eight miscellaneous subjects. The last eight prints were submitted and purchased at this meeting and included a very fine *Philippe Le Roy* by Van Dyck, several *Jan Livens*, *Four Dancing Women* by Zoan Andrea and *The Senators from The Triumphs of Caesar*, also of the Mantegnian School. All of these have been presented to the Museum.